(c) if so, whether any decision has been taken in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) Since the price of Natural Rubber in the international market is much higher than domestic prices imports of NR through State Trading Corporation do not appear to be a feasible proposition.

Export of Chinese articles to India through Nepal

896. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Nepal tops in garment export to India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Indian markets provide a duty free access for all Nepalese manufactured articles;

(d) whether Chinese products are also finding their way to India through Nepal and enjoying the above privilege; and

(e) if so, the action plan of Government to impose safeguards against Chinese products entering our markets through Nepal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, the imports of readymade garments from Nepal were Rs. 29.13 crores during 2004-05 as per Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics Data.

(c) For duty free access into India, the Nepalese goods should have been made wholly from Indian/Nepalese materials, or the Nepalese goods have undergone a 4-digit level change of the Harmonized commodities Description and Coding system. Besides, third country inputs in the goods manufactured in Nepal should not exceed 75% of the ex-factory price during the first year, from 6.3.2002 to 5.3.2003 and 70% thereafter. Further, duty free imports from Nepal into India in respect of four items viz., vanaspati,

copper products, acrylic yarn and zinc oxides have been restricted to annual quotas.

(d) and (e) The India-Nepal Treaty of Trade prohibits export of third country goods from Nepal into India without the fulfilment of value addition and processing conditions prescribed under the Treaty. Hence, Chinese goods cannot be re-exported from Nepal into India under the India-Nepal Treaty of Trade. Government of India makes all efforts to prevent and control smuggling across the India-Nepal border. In addition, under the India-Nepal Agreement to Control Unauthorised Trade, Governments of the two countries cooperate with each other to prevent unauthorized trade across their border. Field formations of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence have also been sensitised to prevent smuggling of third country products through Nepal.

AEZs for agricultural products

897. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposals for setting up Agri-Export Zones for agricultural products like tea, coffee, tobacco and fish in areas rich in production of specific agricultural products; and

(b) if so, for which agricultural products such export zones are to be set up, indicating the annual production of exportable agro products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) An Agri Export Zone (AEZ) for Darjeeling tea has already been approved. There is no proposal for setting up AEZs for coffee, tobacco or fish. A peer evaluation of the performance of the existing AEZs, with a view to ascertain the reasons for shortfall in achievement of targets and suggest remedial action, has been undertaken. Setting up of new AEZs would be considered after the evaluation is complete.